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ABSTRACT

Magazines are popular information sources for teens and already may have played a significant role in educating teenagers about AIDS. Many AIDS activists and health educators believed coverage of Magic Johnson's November 1991 announcement that he had contracted AIDS through heterosexual sex might help to convince teenagers about their AIDS risk. A content analysis was conducted of coverage of Johnson's disclosure and of AIDS in general in 43 magazine articles published in the December 1991 and January and February 1992 issues of magazines (including "Sports Illustrated," "The Sporting News" and "Jet") popular with teenage readers. The analysis showed that few articles included comprehensive information about AIDS. Few articles stressed that teenagers are at risk of contracting HIV or provided practical information, such as how to negotiate condom use with a partner, that might help sexually active teenagers reduce their risks of contracting the disease. (One table of data is included. Contains 41 references.) (Author/RS)

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Missed Opportunities:

Coverage of Magic Johnson and AIDS

in Magazines Popular with Teenagers

by

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ABSTRACT

Magazines are popular information sources for teens and already may have played a significant role in educating teenagers about AIDS. Many AIDS activists and health educators believed coverage of Magic Johnson's November 1991 announcement that he had contracted HIV through heterosexual sex might help convince teenagers about their AIDS risks. A content analysis was conducted of coverage of Johnson's disclosure and of AIDS in general in 43 magazine articles published in the December 1991 and January and February 1992 issues of magazines popular with teen-age readers. The analysis showed that few articles included comprehensive information about AIDS. Few articles stressed that teenagers are at risk of contracting HIV or provided practical information, such as how to negotiate condom use with a partner, that might help sexually active teenagers reduce their risks of contracting the disease.

Introduction

On Nov. 7, 1991, Earvin "Magic" Johnson, a star basketball player for the Los Angeles Lakers and a popular figure among teenagers, announced that he had contracted HIV, the virus that causes acquired immune deficiency syndrome. Johnson's announcement that he would retire from the Lakers and work to educate youth about AIDS stunned his fans, but AIDS activists and educators throughout the nation hailed Johnson as a hero whose public acknowledgement of his own disease and efforts to teach others about it could be an invaluable resource.

Johnson stressed that he had contracted the virus through heterosexual activity, and the response from heterosexuals nationwide was immediate. Throughout the country, drugstore managers suddenly found themselves having trouble keeping condoms on the shelves. The day after the announcement, condom manufacturer Carter-Wallace's stock jumped 3 percent on the New York Stock Exchange. Requests for HIV tests skyrocketed, as did calls to AIDS hotlines nationwide. Even a month after Johnson's announcement, the AIDS hotline at the Centers for Disease Control was receiving approximately 25,000 calls daily, compared to 3,000 a day before Johnson's announcement (People Weekly, 1991.

Because Johnson is so well-known and respected among adolescents as well as adults, and because he was infected through heterosexual activity, Johnson's case could have presented a perfect opportunity for educating teenagers about their risks of contracting HIV getting the disease through heterosexual sex. This paper investigates

how well the most popular magazines among teenagers made use of that opportunity to include vital information about HIV and AIDS.

The Risk of AIDS Among Teenagers

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), as of December1992, there had been 253,448 cases of AIDS reported in the United States, and it is estimated that 1.5 million people are infected with the AIDS virus. Teenagers account for 7 percent of the U.S. population (Gelman, 1990) but fewer than 1 percent of all people with AIDS in the United States (Centers for Disease Control, 1993). However, 4 percent of people with AIDS are 20 to 24 years old, and another 15 percent are 25 to 29 years old (Centers for Disease Control, 1993). Because the incubation period (the time after infection but before symptoms appear) is estimated to average 7.8 years (Burger et. al, 1990), many if not most AIDS victims in their 20s probably contracted the virus when they were teenagers.

The number of reported AIDS cases among 13- to 21-year-olds is doubling every 14 months (Gibbs, 1991; Hein, 1992), and a CDC analysis of blood samples in urban hospitals in 1989 revealed that 1 percent of 15- and 16-year-olds in high-risk cities such as Miami and New York are infected with the AIDS virus (Dworkin, 1989). AIDS currently is the sixth most common cause of death for people 15-24 years old and could be among the top five causes of death for that age group within the next few years (Hein, 1992).

A recent study suggests different patterns of HIV transmission in teenagers than in adults. Teenagers with AIDS are more likely than adults to have acquired the virus through heterosexual activity and less likely than adults to have acquired it through homosexual activity or intravenous drug use (Vermund et al., 1989). And while women account for only one of every seven cases of AIDS among adults, one of every three teenagers with AIDS is a girl (Gibbs, 1991).

Although teenagers may know quite a bit about AIDS, many still engage in risky behavior (DiClemente, 1990; Hingson et al., 1990). This could be due to a variety of reasons: teenagers tend to be risk-takers (Tonkin, 1987); they do not think they can get AIDS (DiClemente, 1990; Price, Desmond & Kukulha, 1985); they may not know anyone with the disease (Center for Population Options, 1988); they may have altered their sexual behavior but are not using effective methods (Strunin, 1991); and they may be influenced by the belief that others in their peer group do not use condoms (DiClemente, 1991).

Other evidence suggests teenagers are at increasing risk of contracting HIV due to their sexual practices. More than 50 percent of girls and more than 60 percent of boys are sexually active by age 17 (Gibbs & Rizzo, 1990), and they engage in high levels of sexual activity (Abrams et al., 1990). Teenagers also have a tendency to have multiple partners (Lerner & Spanier, 1990), with males more likely than females and blacks more likely than whites to have had more than one partner (Kegeles et al., 1988; Yawn & Yawn, 1987; Zelnik & Kantner, 1977). Many teenagers become sexually active much

earlier than 17, which is significant because intercourse initiated at an earlier age has been associated with a greater number of sexual partners (Gibbs & Rizzo, 1990).

Teenagers are also at risk because they fail to use or inconsistently use condoms (Quakenbush, 1987). Studies have also shown that younger teenagers are less likely to use contraceptives at first intercourse and more likely to delay longer before using adequate protection (Hayes, 1987). A recent study indicates that approximately 54 percent of 17- to 19-year-old boys reported using a condom at first intercourse (Sonenstein, Pleck & Ku, 1989), suggesting that nearly half of sexually active boys in the age group most likely to use protection were not protected from AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases during their initial sexual experiences. A study of Canadian youth indicates that only one-quarter of teenagers who engage in sexual intercourse frequently protect themselves or their partners by using condoms and spermicides at least most of the time. It also revealed that teenagers with the most sexual experience are the least enthusiastic about condoms, and only 14 percent of the sample at the college/university level reported using condoms all the time (King, 1989). Sexually transmitted diseases such as chlamydia, genital warts, herpes, gonorrhea, and syphilis, have increased among teens in recent years, with 3 million cases reported each year (Silberner, 1991), also suggesting that many teenagers are not practicing safe sex.

Teenagers are not ignorant about the heterosexual transmission of AIDS. In a study of Massachussetts teenagers, more than 90 percent of all ethnic and racial groups surveyed understood that the disease could be transmitted from a male to a female and

from a female to a male (Strunin, 1990). And teenagers' use of condoms has increased as teens have become more knowledgeable about AIDS transmission; the percentage of male adolescents who reported using a condom during their most recent sexual intercourse increased from 21 percent in 1979 to 58 percent in 1988 (Hingson & Strunin, 1992; Sonenstein, Pleck, & Ku, 1989). Other studies have not been so encouraging, however. At least one has shown that teenagers may talk to their partners about AIDS before engaging in sexual intercourse, but the effect may be to make them less, rather than more likely to use condoms. Recent research with college students reveals that young men who talk with their partners about the disease report higher numbers of partners and are less likely to use condoms (Cline et al., 1992).

Researchers have found that beliefs about the likelihood of contracting HIV, the effectiveness of condoms in protecting against HIV and the social acceptability of using condoms all are significant predictors of adolescents' condom use (Hingson & Strunin, 1992). DiClemente and his colleagues have found through a series of studies that adolescents who perceive their peer norms as supporting condom use are significantly more likely to use condoms (DiClemente, 1992), and Fisher, Misovich and Fisher argue that HIV prevention behaviors among teenagers are a function of levels of knowledge, motivation and behavioral skills. These finding suggests that providing teenagers with information showing that they are susceptible to HIV, that condoms can protect them and that condom use is socially acceptable should increase the likelihood of their adoption of safer sex behaviors.

Media as sources of AIDS prevention models

Many adolescent health researchers and practitioners have blamed media portrayals of sexuality as glamorous, exciting and risk-free for providing irresponsible models of sexual behavior that have led to increases in risky sexual behavior (Hayes, 1987; Roberts, 1982; Strouse & Fabes, 1985). Media are believed to influence adolescents' sexual behavior by showing role models who are rewarded for risky behavior (Bandura, 1986). If media influence adolescents' behavior by showing models who are rewarded for risky behaviors, however, they also ought to be able to encourage safer behaviors by demonstrating the negative consequences of risky behaviors and by showing how safer behaviors can be rewarded.

So far, most studies of the impact of mass media on HIV prevention behavior have focused on the effectiveness of public service campaigns aimed at changing people's knowledge, attitudes and behaviors regarding AIDS. However, as research about the negative effects of media has demonstrated, the social learning effects of media need not be limited to intentional campaigns. Romer and Hornik (1992) argue, for instance, that the surge in condom sales that began in 1987 was more likely due to news and feature articles about the Surgeon General's endorsement of condoms as an HIV-prevention technique than to formal AIDS-prevention campaigns. Even more relevant to the current research was a 1991 study of the effects of Magic Johnson's announcement about his HIV infection on the attitudes of clients of a STD clinic in Philadelphia. Langer, Zimmerman, Hendershot and Singh (1992) found that 92 percent of the STD clinic

clients interviewed after Johnson's announcement reported that they planned to be tested for HIV, compared to 52 percent who had reported test plans before the announcement. There was a non-significant increase in the number of respondents reporting high perceived risk for HIV infection (25 percent before Johnson's announcement compared to 34 percent after the announcement), and many of the respondents reporting adopting safer-sex practices as a result of the news about Johnson, including 44 percent who said they had begun using condoms after hearing the news (Langer, et al., 1992).

This study focuses on the potential of magazines to provide teenagers with information suggesting that teens, particularly heterosexuals, are at risk of contracting HIV, that condoms can protect against HIV and that condom use is socially acceptable. Magazine reading tends to increase in adolescence (Wadsworth, 1989). A survey of 14- to 16-year-olds revealed that 53 percent of blacks and 72 percent of whites read at least one magazine, and girls were more likely than boys to read one magazine regularly. One-third to one-half of the white girls reported reading either *Seventeen* or *Teen*. While *Seventeen* was also a popular choice among black girls, more reported reading *Ebony*. *Sports Illustrated*, the top-ranked magazine for all boys, was widely read among girls as well (Klein et al., in press).

Although readers use consumer magazines primarily for diversion (Towers, 1987), surveillance -- using the media to secure new information about the environment or to confirm, reinforce, or modify existing views about the world -- also is an important reason for magazine use (Payne, Severn, & Dozier, 1988). Research has shown that

people obtain significant portions of their information and ideas about social issues from newspapers, magazines, and television (Schoenfeld et al., 1979). In addition, studies have suggested that media users may retain information obtained from print better than that obtained from broadcast sources, in certain circumstances (Beentjes & van der Voort, 1991; Lehrer & Pezdek, 1983).

This is confirmed by the minimal research available on the use of magazines for disseminating information on AIDS to teenagers. A survey of more than 38,000 Canadian youth, ages 11-21, revealed that television, newspapers and magazines have played the major role in providing information about AIDS, surpassing other sources such as radio, school, family, friends, and physicians (King et al., 1989). This suggests that magazines can be considered a widely used source of information about the disease. A 1985 study revealed that high school students who received AIDS information from magazines knew more about the disease than those who had not; as a whole, however, the students did not possess a high level of knowledge about AIDS -- those most knowledgeable only answered 47 percent of the questions correctly (Price, Desmond & Kukulka, 1985).

A recent study of magazines geared toward children and adolescents revealed limited coverage of AIDS; of 79 periodicals, only 13 had published articles related to the disease from January 1983 to April 1989. Although most articles provided basic information about the virus, few gave information on how to protect oneself or others from acquiring or transmitting the virus (Wysocki & Harrison, 1991).

In summary, then, teenagers are at significant risk of contracting HIV because they tend to engage in risky sexual behaviors -- including having multiple sexual partners and failing to use condoms consistently. Media, including magazines, have often been blamed for providing models encouraging teens to practice risky behaviors, but research also suggests that magazines and other media may provide teens with healthier models as well. Magazines are popular information sources for teens and already may have played a significant role in educating teenagers about AIDS.

This study was designed to analyze the information about AIDS included in magazine articles that dealt with Magic Johnson's announcement that he had contracted HIV; the intent was to determine how well the magazines made use of the opportunity to use coverage of Johnson's plight to educate teenagers about AIDS prevention.

Methods

A content analysis was conducted of magazines with a high circulation among 12- to 19-year-olds, as listed in Simmons Market Research Bureau's 1990 Teen Age Research Study (TARS). Although TARS listed 48 magazines, only 33 were reviewed. Nine periodicals were excluded from the analysis because they were not considered typical consumer magazines (e.g., *The Cable Guide, Metro Puck Sunday Comics, National Enquirer*). Six other magazines were excluded because they were not available in any of the local libraries; because five of the six dealt solely with subjects such as hunting, cars or skiing, it is considered highly unlikely that they would have contained any articles related to AIDS or to Magic Johnson's announcement that he had contracted HIV. Of

the magazines that were analyzed, the December and January issues of *YM* and *Sassy* magazines and four weekly issues of *The Sporting News* were missing. Relevant articles were found in other issues of these magazines.

Although the majority of the magazines were not targeted specifically targeted toward adolescents, all had a high circulation among teenagers, ranging from 856,000 for *Essence* to 6,735,000 for *Sports Illustrated*, according to TARS. Of the 10 magazines with the highest circulation among teenagers, three were classified as periodicals geared toward teenagers. Magazines published monthly were analyzed for a three-month period -- December 1991 and January and February 1992 -- after Magic Johnson's disclosure. Magazines published weekly and bi-weekly also were reviewed for those three months, as well as for the weeks in November immediately following the announcement.

Due to the printing schedules of monthly magazines, it was assumed that most would not have an article addressing Magic Johnson's announcement until February. Because magazines are used for surveillance, however, concerned teenagers would likely read articles about AIDS and sex in addition to articles about the basketball star.

Of the 33 periodicals, 14 had published articles that dealt with AIDS or Magic Johnson's HIV infection. The final sample included 43 articles.

Articles were analyzed to determine what information was provided about AIDS including its definition, the length of time it takes before a person infected with HIV develops AIDS, ways in which it is or is not transmitted, methods of prevention, testing, and sources of additional information. Articles were also analyzed to see whether they

emphasized risks to heterosexuals and teenagers and how they handled Magic Johnson's announcement of HIV infection.

Approximately one-third of the articles were coded separately by the two authors; inter-coder reliability for the subsample was 100 percent.

Results

The Sporting News, Sports Illustrated and *Jet* contained the most articles considered relevant, having eight, seven and nine articles respectively. As Magic Johnson is a black athlete and all three are weekly publications, the number of articles in these magazines was not surprising.

Almost two-thirds of the articles were in magazines targeted toward adult men or blacks. It was interesting to note, therefore, that neither *Essence*, a magazine with a predominantly black readership, nor *Sport* carried any articles about Magic Johnson's announcement, although the December issue of *Essence* included an article that briefly mentioned AIDS. Neither *Cosmopolitan* nor *GQ*, magazines that frequently carry articles pertaining to sex, had any articles during the period reviewed that discussed either AIDS or Magic Johnson contracting HIV. Somewhat ironically, however, the March issue of *Cosmopolitan* contained an article that de-emphasized the threat of AIDS to heterosexuals; because that article did not appear during the analysis period, it was not included in the study.

As was anticipated, monthly magazines tended to mention Magic Johnson's disclosure in their February issues, if they discussed it at all. Because news of his HIV

infection was dated at that point, most of these magazines incorporated the news into an article about AIDS or safe sex.

Table 1 about here

Basic Information

In terms of defining the disease, 63 percent of the articles mentioned that AIDS is life-threatening, 37 percent noted that testing positive for HIV is not the same as having AIDS, and 19 percent said AIDS is caused by a virus. Thirty percent discussed the length of time it takes before an infected person gets AIDS.

Transmission

As Table 1 shows, one-third of the articles explained that the virus could be transmitted through homosexual sex, while almost two-thirds pointed out that it could be contracted by engaging in heterosexual sex. Although only 12 percent of the articles included a mention of the risk of contracting the virus by sharing needles, many of the articles said intravenous drug users were considered a high-risk group without explaining why. Nine percent of the articles mentioned blood transfusions or contact with blood as a way of acquiring the virus; *Reader's Digest* was the only magazine that discussed the fact that a person could contract HIV by using unsterilized needles for tattooing or piercing ears or using someone else's razor. Only two (5 percent) of the articles explained that

anal sex was considered very risky, and 7 percent (three articles) mentioned that oral sex was riskier than originally thought.

Few of the articles discussed ways the virus is not transmitted. Twenty-eight percent of the articles mentioned that hugging or touching an infected person did not carry a risk of infection, and fewer than 10 percent said the virus could not be transmitted through mosquito bites or through contact with toilet seats or utensils previously used by an infected person.

Prevention

Although many articles mentioned safe sex, few defined it. Not one of the articles -- even those in teen-oriented magazines -- defined such terms as abstinence or monogamy, words some teenagers might fail to understand or misinterpret (See Table 1). Nine percent of the articles did mention monogamous sex with an uninfected partner as a low- or no-risk activity, and 33 percent mentioned abstinence as a prevention measure.

Although many articles advocated using condoms to prevent contracting the virus, only 14 percent explained that condoms must be used every time a person engages in sexual intercourse unless he or she is positive his or her partner is uninfected. Ebony wisely advised its readers that it is impossible to tell whether or not someone is infected just by looking at him or her. Only one article mentioned that although a person may have tested negative for HIV, if he or she has had unprotected sex within approximately six months before testing, he or she could be infected and not be aware of it.

None of the articles explained how to obtain condoms, only one explained how to use them correctly, and only 14 percent discussed how to negotiate condom use with a partner.

Providing additional information

Less than one-fourth of the articles gave readers information -- such as one of the many AIDS hotline numbers -- that would help them find out more about AIDS. Only two articles told readers how they could be tested for HIV.

Risk to Heterosexuals and Teenagers

Although more than half of the articles emphasized the risk of contracting HIV through heterosexual sex, only 12 percent noted that the risk of heterosexual transmission of the virus is rising. Twenty-one percent included comments from individuals (not experts) about the risks to heterosexuals. Sixteen percent emphasized that teenagers could contract the disease, but only one article said that the number of teenagers contracting the virus had increased substantially in recent years. As Table 1 shows, none of the articles explained why teenagers could be considered a high-risk group, provided comments from or information about teenagers with HIV or AIDS or included comments from teenagers about their perceived risk of contracting HIV. An article in *Sassy* was the only one that focused on the risk to teenagers. Although many articles mentioned Magic Johnson's announced plans to "spread the message" about AIDS to "young people," none of the articles explained what age group Johnson

was trying to reach or why it would be important for Johnson to teach young people about AIDS.

Magic Johnson

Eighty-four percent of the articles noted Magic Johnson's announcement, but only 47 percent mentioned that he said he became infected with the virus through heterosexual contact. Johnson was portrayed as a hero in 26 percent of the articles, including articles in *Jet, Ebony, Sports Illustrated, The Sporting News* and *People Weekly*; he was portrayed as a victim 12 percent of the time and in a negative way in one article. For the majority of the articles, 61 percent, the portrayal of Johnson was neutral. Ironically, he was portrayed both heroically and negatively in *Sports Illustrated* articles. The only article in which he was portrayed negatively condemned him for being promiscuous and for saying he had done his best to "accommodate" as many women as possible.

Discussion

Magazines popular with teenage readers gave fairly extensive coverage to the news about Magic Johnson's discovery that he had contracted HIV; each of the 43 articles included in this study gave magazines an opportunity to help to teenagers that they are at risk of contracting the disease if they are sexually active. But most articles provided inadequate information about the risks to teenagers and heterosexuals, on how to avoid contracting the virus or where readers could obtain more information.

Many articles provided limited information about how HIV is transmitted and basic facts about the disease. Since AIDS is often portrayed as a homosexual disease, it was interesting to note that more articles mentioned heterosexual than homosexual sex as a means of transmission. This probably was due to Magic Johnson being mentioned in 84 percent of the articles and his statement that he had contracted the virus through heterosexual contact.

It appeared that most magazines assumed their readers already were well-informed about AIDS, and they tended to imply information rather than give it directly. The articles often failed to define terms such as safe sex, abstinence and monogamy, leaving ample room for misinterpretation. *People Weekly, Reader's Digest, The Sporting News, Seventeen* and *Sassy* each carried a particularly informative article in one of their issues. Other magazines, although they may have included more relevant articles, were less useful.

Sports Illustrated -- a particular interesting magazine because of its widespread popularity among both male and female teenagers (Klein, et al., 1992) -- published an entire issue dedicated to coverage of Magic Johnson's disclosure about his condition; yet the special issue provided surprisingly little information about the disease. In fact, one article in that issue began by de-emphasizing the risk of contracting the disease heterosexually; the author said "let us not dress this up too much: Magic's history is one not just of sexual activity but promiscuity" (Swift, 1991, p. 43), ignoring the fact that sometimes all it takes is one contact with an infected person to contract the virus. This

article also included remarks by promiscuous athletes who described women as temptresses and themselves as helpless victims. One athlete who was interviewed said women did not want safe sex because they were trying to have his baby so that they would be set for life. Articles like this one, rather than helping educate teens about the risks of AIDS, might have been more likely to convince teenage boys that risky sexual behavior is acceptable -- perhaps even exciting; instead of helping readers to understand the realistic AIDS risk to heterosexuals, the article portrayed athletes as being surrounded by beautiful and sexually willing women.

Ironically, the *Sports Illustrated* article that provided the most information about AIDS, titled "For Kids Only," was targeted to young children.

Jet, a particularly popular magazine among black teenagers (Klein et al., 1992) also ran many relevant articles, yet only three were particularly useful. Too often the focus in *Jet* articles was on the events Magic Johnson had attended and with whom he had spoken, similar to coverage of a political candidate campaigning for office. This is unfortunate, especially in light of the fact that the black community has been particularly hard hit by AIDS. *Ebony*, a monthly periodical also targeted toward blacks, ran one article that was very informative. *Essence*, the only other magazine targeted specifically for blacks, had no practical information.

Researchers have found that simply knowing about how to protect themselves from AIDS often does not lead teenagers to adopt safer sexual behaviors. DiClemente and his colleagues have found, for instance, that the level of AIDS knowledge alone was

not a good predictor of teenagers' adoption of AIDS-preventive behaviors; however, teenagers were more likely to adopt AIDS-preventive behaviors if they perceived themselves to be at risk of contracting HIV (DiClemente, 1990). The need to convince teenagers that they are, in fact, at risk of contracting HIV if they are sexually active was one reason AIDS educators were so interested in Magic Johnson's message; many believed that teens might see Johnson's plight as proof that AIDS was not a disease confined to homosexual men and IV drug users. But of the stories we analyzed, few stressed the risk of HIV to teenagers.

Even fewer included information about how to negotiate condom use with a partner, a skill health educators argue will be crucial for sexually active teenagers to have if they are to keep themselves safe from HIV (Silver & Bowermaster, 1991). Only one article explained how to use condoms, although health specialists say teenagers -- even college students -- frequently do not know how to use a condom correctly.

One notable exception, at least in the case of discussing how to negotiate condom use, was an article in the February issue of *Sassy* magazine. The article explained that condoms must be used every time the couple has sex, that they're more effective when used with spermicides and that condoms that have been carried around for weeks or months are more likely to break. In addition, it gave several good, concrete suggestions for arguments girls can use to encourage their partners to use condoms and assured readers that any boy who would break off a relationship because the girl refused to have sex without a condom is "a big, fat, skanky loser" (Anne B., 1992, p. 53.).

As the *Sassy* article demonstrates, there were exceptions to the overall disappointing record of magazine articles in providing comprehensive, useful information about HIV, AIDS and AIDS-preventive behaviors. In general, however, teen readers would have been unlikely to come away from most of these articles with any significant improvement in knowledge, any clearer idea of their own risks of contracting HIV or any better skills for ensuring their own safety. Certainly it is understandable that magazines -- particularly those that target adult readers -- might not have wished to pack articles about Magic Johnson with basic information about AIDS. Nonetheless, Johnson's story offered many magazines a perfect opportunity to provide their readers, both teenagers and adults, with valuable information that could reduce their likelihood of joining Johnson in the ranks of the infected. For most of the articles, that opportunity seems to have been missed.

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Table 1: Percentage of articles including selected information about AIDS

Topic	Percentage
Basic information	
AIDS is caused by a virus	19%
HIV and AIDS are not the same thing	37
AIDS is life-threatening	63
Information about transmission of HIV	
HIV can be transmitted through homosexual sex.	33
HIV can be transmitted through heterosexual sex.	65
HIV can be transmitted through sharing IV drug needles.	12
HIV can be transmitted through blood transfusions.	09
HIV can be transmitted through sharing needles used for tattoos, ear-piercing or through sharing razors.	02

Table 1 (continued)

Topic	**Percentage**
Explains which sexual activities are believed to be most risky.	05
Explains that some activities, like oral sex, are riskier than once thought to be.	07
<u>AIDS Prevention</u>	
Mentions abstinence	33
Mentions monogamy with an uninfected partner	09
Explains terms like monogamy and abstinence	00
Explains that using condoms reduces risk of contracting HIV	14
Explains how to obtain condoms	00
Explains how to use condoms	02
Explains how to negotiate condom use with a partner	14

Table 1 (continued)

Topic	Percentage
Information about people at risk	
Emphasizes the risk to heterosexuals	54
Explains that the risks to heterosexuals are rising	12
Emphasizes the risks to teens	16
Explains why teens are regarded as a high-risk group	00
Includes comments from heterosexuals about their risks	21
Includes comments from teens about their risks	00
Information about Magic Johnson	
Mentions Magic Johnson's announcement that he's HIV-positive	84
Includes mention of how Johnson contracted HIV	47